

Tui plenum: Horace in the Presence of the Gods*

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The first collection of Horace's *Odes* is a study in the elaboration of structure and symmetry. Fantastical variety radiates out in a rosette pattern from normative centers of length, meter, style and subject, soon returning to or circling close by established tendencies. Augustan visual art, with its passion for filling borders, pedestals and capitals with ornate yet symmetrical decorative elements, finds a curious analogue in the intricate yet artful balance of Horace's lyrical monument.¹ In the odes addressed to gods, a normative approach to divine addressees, deeply informed by philosophical orientation, lies at the center of florid elaboration. In this tableau the gods of reinvigorated state cult remain decorative and marginal figures, prominent but serving primarily to illuminate by contrast those divine presences who symbolize and animate the poet's deeper aspirations.

The personal participation of the *princeps* in the arcane and disused rituals he so ostentatiously revived made a deep impression on Horace's contemporaries.² By frequently addressing the ancient and ancestral

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¹ Zanker 1988: 112 : 'The only aspect of a public building in the design of which they (i.e. visual artists) had a free hand was the decorative element. The richness of ornament they evolved had never been seen before and was not constrained by any traditional canon. This was true not only for the ornamental borders of architectural members ... but for every part of the figural decoration.'

² Zanker 1988: 103-104 (Octavian acting as a *fetialis*), 115, 126-27, 169 (sacrifices to open the Secular Games).

deities, the poet follows an analogous path, even as he, in this first collection of odes, conspicuously separates himself from important aspects of Augustan religion. Lyrical distillations of hymn and prayer substitute for the archaic and magical formulae of state religion, and Horace equivocates masterfully as he approaches Apollo and Jupiter, two preeminent gods of the Augustan pantheon. He gives pride of place instead to Mercury, a peripheral deity in imperial cult, and repeatedly invokes and is overcome by the power of the Muses and Bacchus. In this way he transmutes the spirit of religious revival already in the air after Actium, a spirit his Epicurean sympathies have scarcely prepared him to embrace unambiguously, into the lyrical presence of gods congenial to his thought and poetical instincts.

The vexing topic of Horace and the gods has been surveyed by different scholars under different names—‘Religion and Mythology,’ ‘Cult and Personality,’ ‘Gods and Religion’³—without an overwhelming critical consensus on the key question of what role the gods play in Horatian lyric.⁴ The present inquiry, therefore, in the hope of simplifying the question, will attempt to focus itself, with a few exceptions, on examining in the first collection of odes what Jenny Strauss Clay once called the gods’ ‘mode of being present.’⁵ How does the poet address the gods, and how, when he does address them, do they become present in the world of the poem?

In order to illustrate how modes of address and presence add nuance, dimension and occasionally countervailing meaning to Horace’s lyrical dalliance with the deities of popular cult, I turn first to the ode that speaks most directly to belief in the gods, *Odes* 1.34—a poem which, as it turns out, is not addressed to any of them, nor, indeed, to anyone at all.⁶

³ Oksala 1973, Griffin 1997 and 2007 respectively.

⁴ Cf. Oksala 1973: 16–24, who cites with approval the nuanced view of Fraenkel 1957: 141; there is a more elaborate presentation of Fraenkel’s view at Fraenkel 1957: 163–66. Cf. also Breuer 2008: 33–42, especially 40–42, where he distinguishes a biographical approach, a literary-historical approach (Fraenkel, N-H), and an aesthetic-symbolic approach (Klingner, Pöschl), and concludes that there is no consensus ‘vor welchem religiösen Hintergrund die Gedichte des Horaz zu lesen sind.’

⁵ Clay 1983: 138.

⁶ Very few odes lack an addressee; Heinze 1923 in fact defines the Horatian ode as an address spoken in *propria persona*. Only six odes in the first collection (1.34, 1.36, 2.15, 3.2, 3.5 and 3.9) lack a named or anonymous addressee and these generally either allow a recipient for the poem to be understood (1.36, 3.2, 3.5) or blend lyric with another genre where different *personae* are to be expected (pastoral *amoeban* in 3.9, satire in 2.15). 1.34 is the only ode where the speaker, speaking

The ode opens abruptly (1.34.1-8):

Parcus deorum cultor et infrequens⁷,
 insanientis dum sapientiae
 consultus erro, nunc retrorsum
 uela dare atque iterare cursus
 cogor relictos.⁸ namque Diespiter
 igni corusco nubila diuidens
 plerumque, per purum tonantis
 egit equos uolucrumque currum

A sparing and infrequent worshipper of the gods while I wandered, learned in an insane wisdom, now I am compelled to sail in the opposite direction and travel again courses left behind. For Jupiter who usually divides the clouds with flashing fire led his thundering horses and his flying chariot through a clear sky.

This opening is more complex than it at first appears. *Insanientis* ... *sapientiae* is often taken to refer to the Epicureanism of the poet's youth.⁹ Of course, Epicureanism and traditional religion are not perfect opposites: Epicurus and his followers expended much effort disclaiming atheism, even going so far as to call famous atheists 'insane'.¹⁰ Veneration of the gods is perfectly acceptable to an Epicurean so long as it is free from fear and superstition.¹¹ Is it then, as some commentators suggest, that the speaker is renouncing Epicurus' atomistic explanation of thunder and lightning?¹² This reading would make good sense, but it does not exactly square with the frequentative adverb *plerumque* (7). For 'usually' would seem to indicate

in his customary first person, gives no hint of the direction in which he speaking, unless (as argued in Barber 2012 and elsewhere) it is to be joined with 1.35, which opens with an address to Fortuna.

⁷ The text is from Klingner 1959, except where alternate readings are noted. All translations are my own.

⁸ Keeping the reading of the manuscript (*relictos*) for the popular conjecture of Heinsius and Bentley (*relectos*).

⁹ So K-H 1908: 141 ('Horaz war in jungen Jahren Epikureer ...'), N-H 1970: 377, West 1995: 162 *et al.*

¹⁰ For Epicurean ideas of worship cf. Cicero ND 1.45b=Long and Sedley 23E (*nam et praestans deorum natura hominum pietate coleretur, cum et aeterna esset et beatissima-habet enim uenerationem iustam quicquid excellit* ...); for the insanity of atheists, cf. Philodemus, *Piet.* 112.1-18=Long and Sedley 23H (καὶ [μαίνεσθαι] καὶ βακχεύουσιν αὐτοὺς [sc. Prodicus and Diagoras and Critias]).

¹¹ Admittedly *religio* is difficult to separate from *superstitio* in actual cult practice; cf. Dyck 2003: 120-21.

¹² E.g. West 1995: 162, Breuer 2008: 36 (who does not actually believe the poet is making such a renunciation).

that the speaker always, even while he questioned traditional religious beliefs, regarded lightning as Jupiter, although the appellation may be a mere metonym, a poetic license, innocent of deeper theological implications. Here the reader is confronted with a contradictory mix of personification (Jupiter rides his chariot across the sky) and metonymy (Jupiter is another name for the natural phenomenon of lightning). The linguistic slippage suggests a rather loose adherence to the fine points of Epicurean doctrine, and a lingering interest in the anthropomorphism of popular religious cult.

Or perhaps the traditional interpretation can be redeemed by understanding a further subtext. To paraphrase: 'I had little concern for the gods so long as I believed that Jupiter was just another name for the phenomenon of lightning (which occurs, according to Epicurus, when clouds collide). But when I heard thunder in a clear sky, I was compelled to take Jupiter seriously as a force unto himself.' That the poem continues with a series of mythologies and personifications reinforces this last idea. Land and rivers are shaken, but also the Styx and the underworld (10 *inuisi horrida Taenari / sedes*) and the boundaries of the known world where Atlas holds up the sky (11 *Atlanteus finis*), myths about nature that the Epicureans would no doubt dismiss or explain scientifically.¹³ The poem then turns to an assessment of the god's power; he can strike down the lofty and raise up the lowly, bring light to the obscure and darkness to the brilliant, just as Fortune, with a terrifying shriek (15 *cum stridore acuto*) snatches the crown from one and enjoys giving it to another (13-16).

Yet even as the speaker does not seem to have been an absolutely doctrinaire Epicurean, so too is the depth of his 'conversion' questionable.¹⁴ For if this poem were truly a renunciation of irreligious ways, one might expect an invocation or a prayer: what better way to show oneself a frequent and unsparing worshipper than actual worship? Yet the last stanza offers nothing of the sort, fixing instead on the inconstancy of God and Fortune, in anticipation of the next poem, the Ode to Fortuna. Jupiter's power is inexplicable and capricious; no reason is suggested for thunder in a blue sky, and none for the fall of the mighty or the meteoric rise of the weak.

¹³ Cf. West 1995: 163.

¹⁴ K-H 1930: 142 see, on the other hand, unquestionable sincerity: 'Das Gedicht will durchaus ernsthaft gefaßt sein als Bekenntnis einer religiösen Bekehrung...' For the opposite view, cf. N-H 1970: 377: 'we must not take the recantation seriously ...'

In sum, one may believe in Jupiter's might without believing that he is just or that he heeds the prayers of man; the speaker is willing to commit an Epicurean heresy by admitting that Jupiter does indeed cause thunder, that gods do lie indeed behind natural phenomena, but nevertheless he will not concede that their influence is just or rational, or that the gods' favor can be gained by pious acts. This Jupiter is simply a force beyond reckoning. The speaker fittingly turns aside, addressing his invocation and his prayer instead to Fortuna in the conjoined *Odes* 1.35.

Augustus vowed a temple to Jupiter in 26 B.C. after narrowly escaping a lightning strike; the dedication of the opulent Temple of Jupiter Tonans fulfilled that vow in 22 B.C., a year after the publication of *Odes* 1-3. Yet Apollo, to whom Octavian credited his victory at Actium, had already assumed pride of place in the imperial pantheon. Octavian dedicated the Temple of Palatine Apollo on October 9, 28 B.C. The very next year, when he was granted the title Augustus by the Senate, his doorposts were decorated with laurel trees, a symbol, by happy accident, sacred to his patron deity.¹⁵ Such honors, ostentatious in their modesty, nonetheless lent the house the numinous air of an ancient shrine, further nurturing an association promoted since the days of the triumvirs.¹⁶ Soon the Sibylline books, transferred from the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus on the Capitoline, were deposited in gilded cases under the pedestal of Apollo's cult statue, that under such auspices there might begin a messianic age.¹⁷ *Odes* 1.31 is usually thought to celebrate the momentous occasion of the temple's dedication.¹⁸

It is a muted celebration. The poem begins by questioning openly what *Odes* 1.34 merely quietly omits: the expected prayer to the divine dedicatee (*Odes* 1.31.1-3):

Quid dedicatum poscit Apollinem
uates? quid orat de patera nouum
fundens liquorem?

¹⁵ *Res Gestae* 34; cf. also the *aurei* minted in 19/18 and 12 BC depicting the laurels along with the *clipeus uirtutis* and the civic crown at Zanker 1988: 92.

¹⁶ Zanker 1988: 93.

¹⁷ For the transferal of the books, cf. Suet. *Aug.* 31. For the age of Apollo, cf. Virg. *Ecl.* 4.10 (*tuus iam regnat Apollo*) and Coleman 1977: 134. A statue of Augustus in the attached library was distinctly Apollonian in appearance, as Servius' notes ad loc. in his description of the new age: *ultimum saeculum ostendit, quod Sibylla Solis esse memorauit. et tangit Augustum, cui simulacrum factum est cum Apollinis cunctis insignibus*. Cf. also Galinsky 1996: 314.

¹⁸ K-H 1908: 131, N-H 1970: 347; Veyne 1965 denies the connection.

What does the bard seek from Apollo consecrated (in his new temple)? For what does he pray, pouring new wine from its cup?

There follows a list of benefits the speaker does not seek: he does not ask for the grain of fertile Sardinia (3-4 *opimae Sardiniae segetes feracis*), nor the herds of Calabria (5-6 *grata Calabriae / armenta*), nor gold, nor ivory, nor Campanian estates (7-8 *rura, quae Liris quieta / mordet aqua*).¹⁹ He has no desire for the vines of Cales, nor to make expensive wine so that a rich merchant can gulp it down in fancy cups (10-12 *diues ut aureis / mercator exsiccet culillis / uina Syra reparata merce*).²⁰ This brings the speaker back to the idea of divine favor; this merchant is indeed dear to the gods, not because of his wealth, but because he has managed to escape death despite three or four yearly trips through the straits of Gibraltar (13-15 *ter et quater / anno reuisens aequor Atlanticum / inpune*). Introduced here is the notion that the most valuable thing, more valuable than any material gain, is not losing and having the time to enjoy what one already has. By the grace of the gods, the merchant has kept his life, but the speed with which he drinks his costly wine and the frequency of his long voyages hint that he lacks the *otium* with which to savor his prosperity properly. On the other hand, what use is the favor of the gods to the man with the time and the ability to live in the present? Now the speaker turns to himself (*Odes* 1.31.15-20):

me pascunt oliuae,	15
me cichorea leuesque maluae.	
frui paratis et ualido mihi,	
Latoe, dones et precor integra	
cum mente nec turpem senectam	
degere nec cithara carentem.	20

Olives nourish me, and chicory and mallow, light fare. Son of Leto, I pray that you allow me to enjoy what is present, healthy,

¹⁹ A.J. Woodman suggests to me that *mordet* ('eats away') in line 8 hints that the country estate is situated on a floodplain, and is thus inherently undesirable, just as the occupations listed in 1.1 are described in mostly unflattering terms.

²⁰ Reading *ut* with Bentley rather than *et* favored by N-H. *Culillae* are normally religious vessels, as Porphyrio points out; thus the merchant's use of them for secular purposes is irreligious.

with an intact mind, and not let me live out a wretched old age,
nor one that lacks the cithara.

If we accept the occasion traditionally assigned to this poem, we will find it akin to others in the *Odes* where the speaker offers or advises a more modest offering to the gods.²¹ Here, however, the idea is taken to an extreme. Augustus has dedicated a temple to Apollo, the most magnificent of all his religious buildings;²² the speaker offers only a cup of wine, and he asks only to keep what he already has. This is not just playful variety; the exceptional delay of the invocation and the prayer highlights the contradiction between the poet's philosophy of life and the unthinking piety of those who pray for worldly gain. Certainly it is an Epicurean commonplace to say one ought to enjoy what is at hand, and the *reductio ad absurdum* of the prayer to Apollo here is a gesture, in the guise of veneration, to the Epicurean idea that the gods are indifferent to human affairs.²³

There is perhaps something paradoxical in the idea that the poet, after assuming the solemn mantle of *uates* and pouring out new wine for Apollo in celebration of a newly dedicated temple, might proceed nonetheless to question the need for prayer.²⁴ Yet the paradox of medium and message pointing in different directions on the question of divine attention or indifference is familiar almost from the beginning of the collection. Already in *Odes* 1.2.29-40, with a crisis at hand, the poet contemplates a prayer but declines to address it to the celebrated patron gods of imperial house. Jupiter, then Apollo, then Venus and Mars, future companions in the Temple of Mars Ultor in the Augustan Forum, are all graciously but conspicuously passed over as addressees of the prayer with which the poem ends (45-52) in favor of Mercury—if he is indeed taking the form of Octavian.²⁵ Alternatively, the prayers pass to the man himself. Careful readers have noticed that the decision

²¹ Cf. 2.17.30-32, 3.23, 4.2.53-60.

²² Vell. 2.81 *templumque Apollinis et circa porticus facturum promisit, quod ab eo singulari extractum munificentia est.*

²³ N-H 1970: 348 suggest the first idea and trace the concept of 'propriety in prayer' all the way back to the (ps.?)Platonic *Second Alcibiades*; this is the argument (as K-H 1908: 131 explain) that you should not pray for earthly goods without knowing whether they are actually 'good', will make one happy, etc.

²⁴ This is noticed by N-H 1970: 347: 'In our ode Horace's solemn appearance as a *uates* might lead one to expect something similarly patriotic and conventional [i.e. similar to Prop. 4.6].'

to pray to a divine man in lieu of a god is anticipated by the question *cui dabit partis scelus expiandi* / *Iuppiter*: a god can scarcely be called to expiate a crime committed by man against another god.²⁶ Thus, though the matter of the poem seems outwardly in keeping with the spirit of religious revival, the speaker in fact holds back on one critical point: he has no intention of praying in a conventional way to the gods of state cult.

In order to settle on Mercury as the god from whom Octavian may derive his magnificence and power, Horace first must pass over a more obvious choice: augur Apollo, in all his cloud-girt brilliance (1.2.31-32 *nube candentis umeros amictus* / *augur Apollo*). The prominence of Apollo in Augustan religion and imagery has already been mentioned; this deity, formerly peripheral in Roman literature and religion, was to become the symbol of the Augustan Age *par excellence*.²⁷ State cult granted no such prominence to Mercury. A *sestertius* depicting the Tiberian Temple of Concordia is perhaps illustrative of a typical arrangement: Mercury is on the steps, next to Hercules, while Concordia and associated deities crowd the rooftop. So we might intuit that Mercury in this instance merely represents the material prosperity (*merces*) afforded by the *principate*, just as Hercules signifies security, and the others peace, harmony, health and the like.²⁸ How could this lowly, materialistic god embody the splendid promises of the Age of the Sun?

Horace soon endeavors to explain his unusual soteriology. A rather different and considerably more learned Mercury appears in *Odes* 1.10,

²⁵ West 1995: 13 points out this caveat, paraphrasing the second half of the poem as follows: "Come, Apollo, or you, Venus, if (*siue*) you prefer, or you, Mars, if (*siue*) you have a thought for . . . (and now comes the sleight of syntax) or if you, Mercury, are imitating Octavian, do not be in haste to return to the sky'. There is a calculated blur in Horace's logic and it is a little crude to say simply, as some scholars do, that he is claiming that Octavian is the god Mercury in human form.' Similarly evasive passages postponing deification can be noted at 3.5.2-4 (Augustus **will** be considered a god on earth [*praesens diuus*] **if** he subdues Britons and the Persians) and 3.3.11-12 (Augustus **will** drink nectar among the deified).

²⁶ K-H 1908: 15 speak ambiguously of 'einen von Jupiter . . . bestellten göttlichen Vermittler', through whom the crime will be expiated; yet if, as N-H 1970: 29 believe, this expiation will come through an expedition against foreign enemies, the choice may be godly, but must also be human. Cairns 1971: 75 calls the implication that one god might make expiation to another god on man's behalf 'impossible theology'.

²⁷ Miller 2009: 3 and n. 17 above.

²⁸ Zanker 1988: 111, who considers the 'web of imagery' here emblematic of the 'typical Augustan temple.' Mercury fulfills this same distinctly Roman role as *lucri repertor* in *Sat.* 2.6.5-15 (cf. Fraenkel 1957: 164) and *Odes* 1.30 (cf. N-H 1970: 344).

a poem which ends the parade of metrical variety of *Odes* 1.1-9 by repeating the Sapphic meter of 1.2. This enigma of an ode thus occupies an important position in the collection. Mercury is praised for his eloquence (1 *facunde*), cunning (2 *catus*, 7 *callidum*), inventiveness and musicality (6 *curvaeque lyrae parentem*), his playful deceit (7-12), his ability to guide the living and the dead (13-20), and his affability, which has broad appeal (19-20 *superis deorum / gratus et imis*). Apollo, conversely, though he threatens, is merely the mirthful victim of Mercury's sleight of hand (11-12 *uiduus pharetra / risit Apollo*). Horace himself borrows liberally and playfully from Alcaeus' *Hymn to Hermes* throughout, but his preference for Mercury over Apollo here and in 1.2 is hardly Alcaic; the Alexandrian edition of Alcaeus' hymns opened with a memorable *Hymn to Apollo*, with the *Hymn to Hermes* coming second.³⁰

Another authorial choice has proven equally perplexing. In most of the immediate predecessors of 1.10 (e.g., 1.2, with its allusions to a flood of the Tiber; 1.3, addressed to Virgil's departing ship; 1.4, which seems to place Sestius in a sympotic setting; and 1.9, where Thaliarchus is asked to look out upon Soracte), the dramatic presence of the addressee on a specific occasion or in a certain notional setting gives an important impetus to the unfolding meaning of the poem. Here, however, Mercury is neither summoned nor entreated to take any action, and the culminating request of prayer is avoided entirely;³¹ this is not a kletic hymn, but rather purely a hymn of praise. The god is addressed with the first word, and remains the focus of celebration until the end of the poem. About the occasion or context of these praises no indication is given.

Such an address of an Olympian god, mysterious though it may seem in isolation, is anticipated in 1.2, as it is reemphasized in 1.31 and 1.34, poems which deal much more directly with religious belief. As in those cases, the speaker declines to turn a lyric utterance full of religious content towards traditional prayer; his silence in 1.10 about the context of the hymn and his own place within it is merely a way of qualifying

²⁹ In as much as 1.2 also is addressed to Mercury (as Octavian) and also employs the Sapphic stanza, the two poems are also thought to be thematically connected; Miller 1991: 369 goes so far as to call 1.2 'a hymn to Augustus,' a definition that fits the last two stanzas better than the preceding eleven.

³⁰ Cf. Cairns 1983: 30 concerning the order of hymns and *passim* concerning Horace's allusive technique; also Lyne 2007: 300, who emphasizes the divine brothers as a pair of 'deities special to a lyric poet.'

³¹ N-H 1970: 127: 'a hymn often ended with a prayer ...'

the overtones of devotion and piety inherent in this particular mode of expression. Once again he is a cautious and idiosyncratic participant in revivalism. He has stepped away from the favored circle of august deities to a playful and poetic god, yet to some degree he still keeps his distance. There is precious little spirituality in this unreflective hymn, though some have endeavored to find it there.³² Identifying parallels between Mercury's and the poet's traits and dispositions in order to understand the god symbolically has been in recent years the more common avenue of inquiry; this has the advantage, at least, of emphasizing the idiosyncrasy of the choice of divine addressee and anticipating deities to which he is more proximate.³³

The preference of Mercury over Apollo in 1.2 and 1.10, where Augustan iconography and the poems of Alcaeus both may have favored the latter, is a sign of Horatian religious innovation.³⁴ More critically, the mode of praise and invocation in these four poems is carefully structured to moderate, question and avoid prayer. Epicureanism, a normative center that draws the poet's forays into popular religion back towards the skeptical philosophy of the elite, certainly makes itself felt here.³⁵ Yet other deities, most notably the Muses and Bacchus, are celebrated precisely for their intimacy with the speaker. By examining how this god and these goddesses are addressed and made present, it becomes clear that the unusual emphasis on Mercury is only the first step towards a distinctive fusion of lyrical sensibility and traditional religious imagery.

³² K-H 1908: 52: 'Aus den Anfangsworten der feierlichen Schlußstrophe sollen wir die Hoffnung des Dichters heraushören, der Gott werde auch seine *pia anima* dereinst zu den *sedes laetae* geleiten.' Cf. also West 1995: 49: 'Of course Horace is a sceptic, sometimes. But he seems here to be writing as a believer, of a god whom he loves, a god who is the eternal form of things he enjoys and things he accepts. If this were so, the ode would be an expression of that spirituality which finds the divine in the particulars of daily life.'

³³ N-H 1970: 128 anticipate a symbolic interpretation, speaking generally of 'allegiance': 'In an astrological age, it is at least possible that Horace pretended an allegiance to the god of unassuming poetry, whimsical trickery, and gentle charm, who helped his lucky devotees to fall on their feet.' Cf. also Reckford 1969: 194, Miller 1991: 183, Borzsák 1995: 12, Houghton 2007, Clay 2010: 139.

³⁴ The much-cited *Odes* 2.7 is another potential instance of this preference and substitution: Mercury saves Horace at Philippi (*sed me per hostis Mercurius celer / denso paudentem sustulit aere* 13-14); in the Homeric parallel cited by Fraenkel 1957: 164, it is Apollo who saves Hector: τὸν δ' ἐξήρταξεν Ἀπόλλων ῥεῖα ... (*Il.* 20.443).

³⁵ Cf. n. 9 above.

The Muses are the most familiar divinities of ancient poetry. These goddesses, frequently addressed by poets of all genres, are subject to two competing interpretations. On one extreme are the anthropomorphic deities of Hesiod, daughters of Zeus and Memory. On the other is the 'secular' Muse, unnamed and singular, the mysterious source of inspiration; she is much closer to an abstraction.³⁶ Attempts have been made to impose a progression from the first to the second, from Greek vitality to Latin artificiality and cynicism.³⁷ If there is such a progression, the *Odes* resist it and in fact push back in the opposite direction.³⁸ More precisely, the poet seems to strike a balance, even a vivid synthesis, between the anthropomorphic and the metonymic in order to render these goddesses especially present in the *Odes*.

The poet advances on two fronts toward this ultimate goal. He explores, through the Muses, the idea of inspiration as uncontrollable, as impulsive, even as madness and possession—an idea not found in Greek poetry before the fifth century.³⁹ When he associates the Muses with this force of inspired possession and merges his agency with theirs, he treats them as more powerful and proximate than do his poetic exemplars. Yet he also enhances the goddesses' traditional attributes in order to depict them as other, endowing them with vividly human characteristics and an independent will, not to mention vast tutelary powers. In the three poems addressed to Bacchus (*Odes* 1.18, 2.19 and 3.25), the god is, as the Muses often are, sensibly, even frighteningly, present. Indeed, in the latter two poems we find the idea of prayer not only questioned but

³⁶ Spentzou in Spentzou and Fowler 2002: 1-10 discusses the distinction, and the 'secularization' of the Muses.

³⁷ Cf. Commager 1962: 2-31; to his credit, he admits some uncertainty about the 'objective ... reality' of the Muse of Homer, Hesiod and Pindar, but he is sure about her degradation. Cf. especially pp. 2-3: '... such vitality as the Muse possessed was to pale into an abstraction. One might, indeed, characterize her biography as the history of a fading metaphor.' Other scholars emphasize the complexity of the Muse's 'ontological status' in both Greek and Latin poets: cf. Fraenkel 1957: 281 n. 1 and Laird 2002: 118.

³⁸ Schmidt 2002: 176-78 notes that the Muses are almost entirely absent from the *Satires* and *Epodes*, and yet far more common in *Odes* 1-3 than in the Greek lyric poets or in Catullus, who does not mention the Muses in his polymetric poems (Schmidt argues that *o patrona uirgo* [1.9], itself a much-disputed expression, refers to Charis).

³⁹ Cf. Dodds 1951: 82 and Murray 1981 *passim* but especially 100, where she summarizes her argument: 'the idea of poetic inspiration in early Greece... was particularly associated with knowledge, with memory and with performance; it did not involve ecstasy or possession, and it was balanced by a belief in the importance of craft.'

turned around: the god possesses the speaker and imposes his will, which the speaker can only resist or submit to.

In the first poem of the collection, the favor of the Muses is treated tactfully as a probability (*si neque tibias / Euterpe cohibet nec Polyhymnia / Lesboum refugit tendere barbiton* 1.1.32-34); in *Odes* 3.30, a poem inextricably linked with 1.1, where not aid, but approval for something already completed is requested, the directive is again carefully moderated (*Odes* 3.30.14-16):

sume superbiam
quaesitam meritis et mihi Delphica
lauro cinge uolens, Melpomene, comam. 15

Assume the pride earned by merit and, Melpomene, if you are willing, with a Delphic laurel bind my hair.⁴⁰

The proud declaration of poetic immortality that is the poem's subject achieves with this request a certain complexity. In the first half of the sentence Melpomene seems to be standing in for the poet and accepting honors for his success; she is asked to be proud of his poetic accomplishments, and the question of by whose merit the prize has been earned is left unanswered.⁴¹ Yet in the second half, *uolens* treats Melpomene as a distinct and distant goddess and grants her the power to refuse.⁴²

This double aspect is familiar. A divinity addressed may serve to symbolize a natural or spiritual force, may seem a mere way of speaking, a way to move the poem towards its true subject—in the Muse's case, a way to seek inspiration, to set the poem in motion—while at the same time assuming human characteristics, even corporeal form. It is evident

⁴⁰ N-R 2004: 376 translate *sume* as 'assume,' citing Caesar *BG* 1.35.5 *Ariovistus tantos sibi spiritus ... sumpserat*.

⁴¹ K-H 1908: 385 and West 2002: 266 argue that the merit is Melpomene's; N-R 2004: 377 consider but reject the idea that *meritis* refers to the poet's 'deserts,' which he is dedicating to the goddess. This latter interpretation is suggested by Porphyrio's comments: *adroga, inquit, tibi gloriam ubertate ingenii quaesitam*.

⁴² K-H 1908: 385 take *uolens* as shorthand for *uolens propitius*, an expression common in prayers (N-R 2004: 377 translate 'of thy grace'); e.g., *uti sis uolens propitius mihi liberisque meis* (Cato, *De Agri Cultura* 134.2), cf. also Livy e.g. 1.16.3, 7.26.5, 24.21.10. Servius suggests that *uolens* at *Aen.* 3.457 may abbreviate the same expression.

even from the example of Euterpe and Polyhymnia in 1.1 that the poet prefers to keep the Muses from becoming complete abstractions: in order to symbolize the poet's assumption of Lesbian meters and themes, the two goddesses are assigned the specific tasks of offering musical accompaniment and tuning the lyre.

In some cases (e.g. *spritum ... tenuem* [Odes 2.16.38,], *desit theatris* [Odes 2.1.10]), the goddesses' anthropomorphism can be elided or quite subtly expressed. At other times, it seems to receive deliberate emphasis. In 1.12, for example, the Muse chooses the subject of the poem (1-3):

Quem uirum aut heroa lyra uel acri
tibia sumis celebrare, Clio?
quem deum?

What man or hero do you undertake to celebrate on the lyre or
the shrill flute, Clio? What god?

The lines are a variation of the famous opening of Pindar's second Olympian ode (O. 2.1-2; trans. Race):

Ἀναξίφορμιγγες ὕμνοι,
τίνα θεόν, τίν' ἥρωα, τίνα δ' ἄνδρα κελαδήσομεν;

Hymns that rule the lyre, what god, what hero, and what man
shall we celebrate?

Horace reverses the order of the potential dedicatees, and also transforms the opening invocation. The emphasis in Pindar is on the primacy of words over music; his words lead, and the *phorminx* follows.⁴³ Horace substitutes Clio for the anonymous 'hymns' and depicts her as already choosing the instrument, with words, presumably the poet's words, poised to follow her lead. Pindar imagines poet and *hymnoi* working in tandem to choose a subject; in the case of Horace's poem the choice belongs more or less exclusively to Clio, who herself chooses both the

⁴³ Cf. Gildersleeve 1885: 143: 'Originally song dominated instrumental music. Music was 'married to immortal verse' as the woman to the man.' He cites Pratinas (= Athen. 14.617D) as evidence.

laudandus and the instrument, and who, if the present of *sumis* is correct and taken literally, has already begun the song.⁴⁴ Horace differs from his model by giving his addressee a specific name, a concrete task and the responsibility for beginning the song, all the more to personify her; yet, at the same time, the subjects she chooses must in some sense be the speaker's subjects, because he quickly shifts into the first person (13 *dicam*). *Odes* 1.24 offers a variation: here the speaker explicitly takes the initiative and asks the Muse to begin (1.24.2-3 *praecipe lugubris / cantus, Melpomene*), but she will both sing and provide the lyre accompaniment (1.24.3-4 *cui liquidam pater / uocem cum cithara dedit*).

It may help to consider one final example of an address to the Muse.⁴⁵ The speaker of *Odes* 3.1 begins by proclaiming himself priest of the Muses (3.1.3 *sacerdos Musarum*), an imaginary office which befits this poem's mixture of religious formulae and poetic individuality.⁴⁶ The assumption of this office is a prelude to the direct address of the Muses—in this case the Muse Calliope, with whom the fourth Roman Ode begins (*Odes* 3.4.1-8):⁴⁷

Descende caelo et dic age tibia
regina longum Calliope melos,
seu uoce nunc mauis acuta,

⁴⁴ The variant *sumes* appears in some manuscripts, but it is difficult to find defenders of this reading; I can cite only Dacier 1709: 182 and Lenchantin de Gubernatis 1945: 17, both of whom favor *sumes* on the basis of the future in Pindar. One could argue that if Clio has already begun, she would not still be deciding whether to play a lyre or a flute: she would have already made her choice. But Bentley 1711: 32 gets around this objection by suggesting that *sumis celebrare* is essentially a future expression: '*Sumis celebrare* habet vim et notationem temporis futuri; idemque valet, ac si dixisset, *celebrabis*.' K-H 1908: 60, N-H 1970: 146 *et al.* in support of the present *sumis* point to a parallel at *Epist.* 1.3.7: *quis sibi res gestas Augusti scribere sumit?*

⁴⁵ The further example of *Odes* 1.26 might plausibly be added: here Horace, innovating on Lucr. 1.927-30, suggests the Muse, rather than the poet, has agency: it is a Muse who delights in pure springs, she who weaves the garland, she and her sisters who will celebrate Lamia with a song both new and old, etc.

⁴⁶ 'At Rome there was an *aedes Herculis Musarum*, but the Muse had no independent priesthood...' (N-R 2004: 8). *Odi profanum uolgus et arceo. / fauete linguis* (3.1.1-2) echoes 'words customary at the beginning of religious ceremonies' (cf. K-H 1908: 250-51); but the first person singular of *odi* and *arceo* strikes a different note, indicating not 'a religious cult but a transposition of such a cult to a different plane, a 'secularization'' (Fraenkel 1957: 264).

⁴⁷ Hesiod singles out Calliope as the most important of the Muses (*Th.* 79 προφερεστάτη; cf. N-R 2004: 57) because she waits upon kings (80 βασιλεῦσιν ἄμ' αἰδοίοισιν ὅπηδεῖ). It is unlikely, however, that the Muses in Horace have the specific functions later assigned to them (cf. Fraenkel 1957: 306 n. 2, N-H 1970: 282-83).

seu fidibus citharaue Phoebi.
 auditis? an me ludit amabilis
 insania? audire et uideor pios
 errare per lucos, amoenae
 quos et aquae subeunt et aerae.

5

Come down from the sky and play on the flute, queen Calliope, a lengthy song, or if you prefer now to sing with a shrill voice, or with a lyre, or with the cithara of Apollo. Do you hear? Or does delightful insanity play games with me? I seem to hear and to wander through sacred groves, which idyllic waters and breezes softly enter.

Once again the Muse is summoned to sing the song, and is asked to choose the instrument of accompaniment. In this case, however, the speaker actually becomes possessed—he has visions of groves and springs, both topoi associated with the Muses.⁴⁸ These are visual hallucinations, but more importantly he hears something, although the object of *auditis* and *audire* is not specified. Could it be the song itself that the speaker hears? If so, this is surely the ultimate expression of the Muse's power over poetry: that the speaker hears his own song as if it were coming from without.⁴⁹ To dramatize the speaker's loss of control, to portray the possession as ongoing and to call on the audience to recognize this, are exceptionally rare moves in the *Odes*.⁵⁰ In addition, the speaker embroiders the claims made for the Muses in 1.26 with expansive detail. The woodpigeons that wove laurel and myrtle over him as an infant in Apulia (3.4.9-20) are *fabulosae*, an epithet which, like laurel and myrtle, associates

⁴⁸ Cf. 1.1.30, 1.26.5-6.

⁴⁹ Cf. Lowrie 1997: 219: '... the asyndetic opening of the narrative in line nine in effect puts a colon at the end of line eight and the rest of the poem is 'her' song.'

⁵⁰ 1.27 and especially 3.25 take a similar approach by making the reader aware of an ongoing situation that is out of the speaker's control; 2.19 has similar elements, but the vision is in the past (2.19.1-2 *Bacchum ... uidi*) and the audience is in the future (2.19.2 *credite posteri*). Fraenkel 1957: 276-85 makes much of the relationship between 3.4 and Pindar, *P. 1* (although this is just one of many potential models and antecedents; cf. Miller 1998: 546-47), but with respect to the opening invocation Horace (as in 1.13) is more ambitious: Pindar merely praises the lyre (1-2 *Χρυσέα φόρμιγξ, Ἀπόλλωνος καὶ ἰοπλοκάμων / σύνδικον Μοισᾶν κτέανον*), and notes that dancers and singers follow its lead (2-4 *τᾶς ἀκούει / μὲν βάσις ἀγλαΐας ἀρχά, / πείθονται δ' ᾠδοὶ σάμασιν*). Even in this meditation on the magical power of music, there is no intimation of the singer's possession or insanity. Cf. also Commager 1962: 206: 'Χρυσέα φόρμιγξ... descende caelo: Pindar's objective salute is a far cry from Horace's subjective command.'

them with the goddesses of poetry; he proceeds to claim the favor of these goddesses through his childhood and the difficult moments of his adult life (21-24). They protected him when imperiled at Philippi and threatened by the falling tree and shipwreck off Sicily (25-28); they will protect him wherever in the world he travels (29-36). Furthermore, the Muses refresh Augustus between wars, and offer and support counsels of peace and clemency (41 *lene consilium*). Quite apart from simply seeking inspiration and divine sanction for his poetry, the poet seems especially eager to praise the Muses at length, to offer them all the credit for his poetry, to attribute to them anthropomorphic characteristics and expansive powers.

One distinctive tendency of the poems addressed to men and women in the first collection of *Odes* is the frequency with which these poems complicate preconceptions of dramatic context and look beyond the present moment—even in cases where the dramatic context ought to be clear.⁵¹ The *auditis* of the second stanza of *Odes* 3.4, which calls upon the audience to recognize something happening in the present, is almost unparalleled in the *Odes*.⁵² This serves to emphasize the general approach to addressing the Muses, an approach which strives to personalize these goddesses and give them concrete tasks and full responsibility for the creation of the poem. Distance between speaker and addressee is hereby closed and divine presence made manifest.

In *Odes* 3.1, the speaker sets himself as an intermediary between the Muses and his choir of boys and girls; in *Odes* 3.4, he fulfills that function by summoning Calliope into his audience's presence. This is, according to one definition, the essential purpose of a hymn: to negotiate between the goddess and her worshipers, to ensure her presence at the festival.⁵³ But the singer or singers of a hymn do not necessarily limit themselves to this request: often they also specify how the god should appear, usually willingly and in good humor.⁵⁴ More elaborate praise and description of

⁵¹ Barber 2014: 333-34 and *passim*. The tendency is most easily illustrated by questions persistently asked of the dramatic setting of various odes: e.g. in 1.7, is Plancus in Tibur or abroad? Where does the speaker of 1.9 address Thaliarchus and in what season?

⁵² Interestingly, ps.-Acro thinks *auditis* is addressed to Calliope: this is an unlikely interpretation, of course, but it may point out how unusual the gesture to the audience is.

⁵³ Burkert 1994: 14: 'Hymnen gehören zu den Göttern, sie richten sich an Götter: Ihre allgemeine Funktion ist es, die Präsenz des Göttlichen herbeizuführen ...'

⁵⁴ Burkert 1994: 14 'Der charakteristische Gruß auch an einen Gott im Hymnos ist *chaire* 'freue dich' ... der Gott soll 'freundlich' sein. Der Hymnos wird dafür sorgen.'

the god's powers and *aretai* can naturally be traced back to the same purpose: to specify with more precision exactly what kind of god is being summoned, and to please that god in order to obtain the desired goodwill. The hymnic complex of invocation, praise/description, and request formalizes and makes poetic the anthropomorphism of ancient religion, and the lengthy invocation and lavish compliments paid to the Muse here and in *Odes* 1.26 should be understood in this context.⁵⁵ Horace reserves for these goddesses precisely the sort of full-fledged veneration he disdained in the case of Jupiter, Apollo and Mercury.

Dionysus, with his shifting forms and proximity to man, has, not unlike the Muses, an ambiguous and double nature: is he the god of wine or the wine itself?⁵⁶ Or some more primal and mysterious force to which wine is only the gateway?⁵⁷ The two most ambitious odes addressed to Bacchus—2.19 and 3.25—thrillingly synthesize and celebrate both the spiritual and the corporeal, enacting a spiritual possession in which the god's corporality plays a critical role. The potency of divine presence is illustrated by the range and height of the speaker's emotions. The joy of the entranced Bacchant and of the inspired poet soon gives way to dangerous irrationality and weakness of will. Praise of Bacchus mingles with fear of his power to possess, to overtake, to kill.

Odes 2.19 begins with the speaker calling on the audience to recognize his vision of the god, proceeding to demonstrate his own possession and finally addressing himself directly to the god, begging for his mercy (*Odes* 2.19.1-8):

Bacchum in remotis carmina rupibus
 uidi docentem, credite posteri,
 Nymphasque discentis et auris
 capripedum Satyrorum acutas.
 euhoe, recenti mens trepidat metu

5

⁵⁵ This is not to say that the hymnic treatment of the Muses is not connected to the other themes of the ode—to the entrance of Apollo (64 *Patareus Apollo*), for instance, who connects the harmony and peacefulness of music to the victory of *uis temperata* and 'order on heaven and earth' (Miller 1998: 551), or to the Augustan settlement, whose association with the Muses shows that 'poetic and political power are derived from the same divine source' (N-R 2004: 56). The point here is rather to put this 'hymn to the Muses' in the context of address in the collection as a whole.

⁵⁶ Cf. Eur. *Ba.* 284-85 with Dodds' note.

⁵⁷ Cf. Dodds 1960: xii, who paraphrases Plut. *Is. et Os.* 365A : οὐ μόνον τοῦ οἴνου Διόνυσον, ἀλλὰ καὶ πάσης ὑγρᾶς φύσεως Ἕλληνες ἡγοῦνται κύριον καὶ ἀρχηγόν ...

plenoque Bacchi pectore turbidum
laetatur: euhoe, parce Liber,
parce graui metuende thyrsos.

I have seen Bacchus teaching songs on distant cliffs—believe it, posterity—and the Nymphs learning and the sharp ears of goat-footed Satyrs. Euhoe, my mind trembles with fresh fear and rejoices confusedly with a heart full of Bacchus. Euhoe, have mercy, Liber, have mercy, O god feared for your weighty thyrsus.

Here, as in *Odes* 3.4, the speaker calls on the audience (presumably readers rather than listeners) to recognize a miraculous epiphany. The speaker suspects that his audience will be incredulous that he has seen Bacchus in the flesh—and he is right.⁵⁸ Thus the calm declarative tone of the first stanza gives way to a state of excitement: the epiphany may have already taken place, but the act of possession is ongoing. Joy at the sight of this wondrous apparition mixes with fear as Bacchus enters into the speaker.⁵⁹ Now in his apprehension the speaker begs the god to spare him the full brunt of his power; the thyrsus can indeed inspire but also madden or kill.⁶⁰ Despite this ambivalence, the speaker, just as in *Odes* 3.4, launches directly into a description of miracles associated with Bacchus—springs of wine, streams of milk, honey falling from trees (9-12)—and moves on to mythology: Dionysus' marriage to Ariadne and his punishment of Pentheus, the Thracians and Lycurgus (13-16). The next stanza (17-20) emphasizes the god's power to change the course of rivers, to calm the sea, and to weave snakes harmlessly into the hair of his worshippers. A striking anecdote follows in which Bacchus turns back the giant Rhoetus with a lion's claws and terrifying jaw (23-24 *leonis / unguibus horribilique mala*). Both the text and the meaning of these lines are disputed, and the story does not have an exact parallel in extant literature, but the symbolism is clear: this god can pacify natural phenomena or turn them to violent use

⁵⁸ E.g. N-H 1978: 317 ('Horace's vision seems as literary as those of other Roman poets ...'), Quinn 1980: 236 ('a transposition of some quasi-visionary experience or wholly fanciful ...'). Both commentators take *credite posteri* as ironical, as an admission that the vision is imaginary, but cf. *Epod.* 9.11 (*posteri negabit*) with Mankin's note.

⁵⁹ Cf. 3.4.5-6 *amabilis / insania*.

⁶⁰ N-H 1978: 320 see the thyrsus as 'an instrument of poetic inspiration'; at Eur. *Ba.* 762-64 *thyrsos* are used as weapons by the Maenads against armed men. Cf. also Apollod. 1.37.3 Εὐρυπτον δὲ θυρσὶ Διόνυσος ἔκτεινε.

against his enemies.⁶¹ This message is further refined in the stanza that follows, which returns to the image with which the poem began, Bacchus as a teacher of songs (*Odes* 2.19.25-28):

quamquam choreis aptior et iocis
ludoque dictus non sat idoneus
pugnae ferebaris; sed idem
pacis eras mediusque belli.

Although you were said to be more apt for dances and fun and play and you were rumored not exactly to be suited for a fight, nevertheless you were alike in the middle of peace and war.

Bacchus was often called a peaceful god, a lover of dances and games, but as he is at peace, so he is in the midst of war. The final stanza perhaps suggests the god's preferred approach to conflict: Cerberus submits meekly to Bacchus (29 *te uidit insons Cerberus*) on account of his extraordinary appearance (29-30 *aureo / cornu decorum*). Thus his power even in conflict is essentially pacifying, and this final image argues that the violent punishments he meted out to Pentheus, Lycurgus, and Rhoetus were extreme expedients and do not make him a warlike god.

The assimilation of speaker and addressee is not limited to the striking presence of Bacchus within the speaker. In fact, this god appears to have been in some sense created in the poet's image. The role of teacher of songs, which the god assumes at the beginning of the poem, is elsewhere taken by the speaker himself.⁶² *Idem pacis eras mediusque belli* is a difficult phrase to unravel: does it mean equally powerful and energetic in war and in peace?⁶³ Or occupying a middle point between the two, and drifting as circumstances urge to the one or the other?⁶⁴ Or central to both in different ways, bringing joy to peace, and calm and equanimity

⁶¹ Bentley 1711: 129-30 conjectured *horribilisque* in order that the Latin clearly state that Bacchus himself has been transformed into a lion. But Pöschl 1991: 312-13 keeps *horribili*que, and argues that lion is merely in Bacchus' retinue, a tool and an emanation of the god who would not so exert himself physically: 'Die Götter kämpfen nicht, sondern siegen durch ihre geistige Gewalt.' Others favor *horribilemque*, suggesting that Rhoetus is the lion; cf. N-H 1978: 328.

⁶² Cf. 1.21.1-4, 3.1.1-4, 4.6.41-44, *Carmen Saeculare* 6.

⁶³ So Porphyrio and many others.

⁶⁴ Dillenburger 1875: 156.

to war?⁶⁵ In this last case Bacchus could be a projection of the soldier/poet persona, or the wine with which both soldier and poet fortify themselves.⁶⁶ Yet the poet does not connect Bacchus to wine in this poem and, in fact, resists this equation by making the extraordinary claim to have seen the god in the flesh.

In *Odes* 3.25, the last of the poems addressed to Bacchus, the god seems much closer to a force or an emotional state. This ode also begins with a possession (1-2):

Quo me, Bacche, rapis tui
plenum?

Where are you taking me, Bacchus, full of you?

The speaker imagines that he is being carried away into groves or caves to sing the apotheosis of great Caesar (2-6); what he will sing will be remarkable, new, before now unheard of (7-8). Here, however, the poet introduces a simile comparing the speaker's experience with that of a Maenad (8-14):⁶⁷

non secus in iugis
exsomnis stupet Euhias
Hebrum prospiciens et niue candidam 10
Thracen ac pede barbaro
lustratam Rhodopen, ut mihi deuio
ripas et uacuum nemus
mirari libet.

Just as the sleepless devotee of Euhius gazes in wonder looking from mountain ridges onto the Hebrus and Thrace white with snow and

⁶⁵ Cf. 1.18.5 (*quis post uina grauem militiam . . . crepat?*), 2.7.5-8, *Epod.* 9.35-36 (*quod fluentem nau-seam coerceat / metire nobis Caecubum*), *Epist.* 1.5.17 ([*ebrietas*] *ad proelia trudit inertem*). Pöschl 1991: 314 puts the emphasis on *idem*, and notes that *idem . . . medius belli* may allude to the godlike equanimity of philosophers; cf. 3.21.11 *prisci Catonis / saepe mero caluisse uirtus*.

⁶⁶ Commager 1969: 339 and Lowrie 1997: 209 note the analogy between Bacchus and Horace. A similar persona is ascribed to Alcaeus in 1.32.5-12. Archilochus also claims to be a warrior, a poet and a servant of Dionysus (cf. *frr.* 1, 2 and 120; *fr.* 4 mixes drinking and guard duty).

⁶⁷ Cf. Fraenkel 1957: 257: 'So intense is the poet's vision of what is happening to the Maenad that he almost identifies himself with her.'

Mt. Rhodope, danced across by barbarous foot, so too I delight in this remote place to marvel at river banks and the empty grove.

No longer summoned from a distance, the god is already present within the speaker and actually carrying him away. Nor has the speaker precipitated some action for which he begs divine assistance—he merely marvels passively at the miraculous wilderness through which Bacchus is transporting him. Inspiration in this case means the disavowing of any poetic initiative, just as the Bacchant acts entirely under the god's power. The description of the god is once again tinged with fear of Bacchus' awesome power. The Naiads and Bacchants over whom he holds sway can uproot tall trees (14-16), and the reader who recalls the punishment of Agave will recognize that this superhuman strength can bring misery to worshippers and profaners of rites alike. Indeed, the opening question of the poem could be read as a variation on the cries for mercy in 2.19 (2.19.7-8 *parce, Liber / parce*); in this poem as well there is a chance that the speaker is seized against his will. The final stanza expresses the quandary perfectly (16-20):

nil paruum aut humili modo,
 nil mortale loquar. dulce periculum est,
 o Linaee, sequi deum
 cingentem uiridi tempora pampino.

. . . nothing small or in a humble mode, nothing mortal will I say.
 It is a sweet danger, O Linaeus, to follow a god, binding my
 temples with a green vine.

The speaker is caught up in the excitement of the god's powers, but fear lingers. There is no request for the god's support, but rather the confident and repeated statement that a remarkable song is imminent (4 *audiar*, 6 *dicam*, 18 *loquar*). Just as the future tense leaves the impression of something unfinished, so too does the abrupt beginning veil the exact origin of the inspiration in mystery.

Why should this Bacchus not be a metonym for wine? This fits *tui plenum*, and binding one's temples with leaves of the grapevine could be a polite and figurative way to allude to intoxication. *Dulce periculum* also seems apt in this sense: the loss of inhibition and pain is sweet, the loss of control dangerous. And the association of wine and poetic inspiration is a

well-known theme in Horace and other poets; a humorous treatment elsewhere does not necessarily preclude a serious treatment here.⁶⁸

Nevertheless, critics have scrupulously avoided this interpretation.⁶⁹ The cause is not simply that the conjunction of wine and political panegyric is too jarring to entertain seriously. It is rather the fact that Bacchus, although he begins the poem as a spiritual force transporting the poet, is still very much the anthropomorphic god of myth. His habitat is groves, river banks and caverns; he holds sway over Naiads and Bacchae. The central metaphor of the poet as a Maenad, who sleepless and astonished gazes over snowy Thrace, gives poetic inspiration a striking mythical and ritual character. From this perspective, the final image may retreat somewhat from the full *enthusiasmos* of the opening lines; here the speaker is not borne quite so wildly away, but follows with some consciousness the footsteps of the god.

Each poem of the Bacchus odes is susceptible to allegorical interpretation, which would equate Bacchus to wine or irrationality personified. In 2.19, Bacchus has already possessed the speaker, who trembles with joy and fear. The god himself is both peaceful and warlike, just as wine, companion of song and dances, fortifier of the soldier's nerves. In 3.25, the speaker is again possessed with poetic inspiration, again aware that the god's power may expose him to danger, but this time he does not resist, rather submitting fully, putting himself in the god's hands, and allowing the experience to happen to him, so full of the god that he has lost all his moderation.⁷⁰ Yet Bacchus still manifests himself in an unavoidably corporeal fashion. In 1.18, he is the god of the Bacchic rout, with its ritual secrets and instruments of wild music, the very ritual which the vivid depiction of the ritual landscape and the extended metaphor of the Maenad of 3.25 seem especially to recall. And the Bacchus

⁶⁸ Cf. Archilochus fr. 120, who sings once his wits have been 'blasted' with wine (ὥς Διωνύσου ἄνακτος καλὸν ἐξάρξαι μέλος / οἶδα διθύραμβον οἶνῳ συγκεραυνωθείς φρένας), 3.19.14-15, 3.21.13-14, *Epist.* 1.5.19, 1.19.1-11.

⁶⁹ K-H 1908: 358: 'Der Dithyrambus ... ist durch das mit erschütternder Gewalt plötzlich auftretende Bewußtsein von Cäsars Göttlichkeit eingegeben ...' Fowler 2002: 151, noting the analogy of the Bacchant, puts this possession in the context of gender: 'Horace figures himself as feminized by the process of inspiration.' This is again paralleled by his awe of Augustus: 'The poet loses control and feminized before the mighty force of the patron's power ...' N-R 2004: 299: 'Horace is not referring to intoxication ...'

⁷⁰ So too in *Odes* 1.18, the speaker asks Bacchus to hold his more unruly and disgraceful followers in check; is he thus proposing moderate drunkenness, mild forgetfulness, and less than full submission to irrational desires and emotions?

who is glimpsed in 2.19 teaching songs to nymphs is even more anthropomorphic than these other two.

Just as hymn and prayer claim for the lyric voice the power to reach the distant and invisible, apostrophe claims the power to reach the mute and unhearing.⁷¹ Just as hymning or praying characterizes the speaker as pious, as the sort of person to whom the gods might respond, so too does apostrophizing characterize the speaker as a mystic, as the sort of person to whom the natural world might respond. The poet of the *Odes* therefore approaches inanimate objects in much the same way he approaches his favored divinities and personifies them creatively and elegantly. *Odes* 3.21, the famous ode to a wine jar, offers an example in the form of a parody of a hymn (*Odes* 3.21.1-8):

O nata mecum consule Manlio,
 seu tu querellas siue geris iocos
 seu rixam et insanos amores
 seu facilem, pia testa, somnum,
 quocumque lectum nomine Massicum 5
 seruas, moueri digna bono die
 descende Coruino iubente
 promere languidiora uina.

O born with me when Manlius was consul, whether you bring complaints or jests or a quarrel or insane love or, devout jar, easy sleep, by whatever name you guard the choice Massic, worthy to be brought out for an auspicious day, come down when Corvinus asks that a mellower wine be produced.

It has long been recognized that this poem has many of the features of a hymn.⁷² *Descende* recalls the invocation of Calliope in *Odes* 3.4 (3.4.1 *Descende caelo et dic age*). But the basic similarity between this poem and poems addressed to the Muses and to Bacchus, for example, is the animation of the addressee, by which process the addressee, paradoxically, begins to resemble the speaker. That the jar was ‘born’ in the same year as the speaker anticipates this move. The jar, not its devotee,

⁷¹ Cf. Culler 2002: 135-54.

⁷² Norden 1913: 143-63, Commager 1962: 126-28, Grant 1977: 22, Nisbet 2002: 82.

is pious.⁷³ Furthermore, what it contains is almost the full range of the drinker's emotional life: laughter, quarrels, love and sleep. Like Calliope, the jar will come out from the storeroom under its own power. Similar anthropomorphic touches are found in the *Odes*' other apostrophes. The ship of 1.3 is addressed as a business partner to whom the speaker has made a loan (1.3.5-6 *tibi creditum / debes Vergilium*). The ship of 1.14 is capable of bringing herself back to port (1.14.2-3 *o quid agis? fortiter occupa / portum*), but she is the daughter of an illustrious family (1.14.12 *siluae filia nobilis*) who puts inordinate trust in her lineage (*iactes et genus et nomen inutile* 1.14.13); nevertheless the speaker finds himself passionately concerned for her well-being (1.14.18 *nunc desiderium cura-que non levis*). The lyre of 1.32 is called upon not just to accompany, but in fact to sing the song (1.32.3-4 *age dic Latinum / barbite, carmen*). The tree of 2.13 is a prodigal son, begotten or raised by a sacrilegious father (2.13.2-3 *sacrilega manu / produxit*), and destined to bring disgrace to his family and hometown (2.13.3-4 *in nepotum / perniciem opprobriumque pagi*). Even the Fons Bandusiae of 3.13 is a chatterbox (3.13.15-16 *unde loquaces / lympae desiliunt tuae*).⁷⁴

Such touches are admittedly very light, but they indicate an interest in exploring the possibilities of address, in thinking imaginatively about how objects might be animate, or more precisely, in ascribing to the addressee characteristics proper to the speaker. It has already been shown that the Muses and Bacchus may stand in for aspects of this same self. Different gods or objects may symbolize the same emotional state. The lyre of 1.32 lightens labors (1.32.14-15 *o laborum / dulce lenimen*), just as wine puts cares to flight (1.18.3-4 *neque / mordaces aliter diffugiunt sollicitudines*), just as the Muses refresh Augustus (3.4.37-40 *Caesarem ... finire quaerentem labores / Pierio recreatis antro*). Calliope brings with her pleasant insanity (3.4.5-6 *amabilis / insania*), just as the wine jar is a mild instrument of torture (3.21.13 *lene tormentum*), just as to follow Bacchus is a sweet danger (3.25.18 *dulce periculum*). Wine makes the drinker forget war (1.18.5 *quis post uina grauem militiam ...*

⁷³ A god may be *pious*, though the usage is rare: cf. Virg. *Aen.* 2.536, 4.382, 5.688-89 and N-R 2004: 248. The examples from Virgil are all conditions asking whether the gods will reciprocate human devotion, so N-R prefer to translate 'kindly.' I have kept 'devout' because I think 'kindly' flattens the personification somewhat; cf. Grant 1977: 24, who argues that Horace plays with the idea that the jar is a woman and *pia* suits a lover, and Syndikus 1973: 189 ('dem Dichter getreu').

⁷⁴ Cf. Commager 1962: 324, Fitzgerald 1999: 196-98.

crepat), just as Bacchus is commonly considered a god of peace (2.19.26-27 *non sat idoneus / pugnae ferebaris*; 3.3.13-14 *tuae / uexere tigres indocili iugum / collo trahentes*), just as the lyre is peaceful (1.6.10 *inbelisque lyrae*) and just as the Muses offer gentle advice (3.4.41 *lene consilium*). These parallels are all the more reason to interpret all such addresses as addresses of the irrational sphere of the speaker's soul, as ways of speaking to that unresponsive yet liberating impulse whose nature can seem uncontrollable.⁷⁵

How can this manner of address, which presumes to internalize external objects and divinities, to make them part of the speaker, coexist with the strong tendency, evident throughout the *Odes*, to individualize and personify non-human addressees? It may be simply that this tendency toward extremes of anthropomorphism, heretical to Plato and Epicurus but characteristic of Greek poets from the time of Homer and Sappho, is imitated by Horace in order to make his divine addressees as lifelike as his human addressees.⁷⁶ Yet there is an additional dimension to the apostrophe of the wine jar: the paradox of this object endowed not only with individuality and will, but also made responsible for the drinker's actions, vividly dramatizes the weakness of the will in the face of irrational impulse, by illustrating, in particular, how this impulse may seem to come from something or someone else. Once the jar descends and releases its latent power, anger, laughter, violence, love and sleep fall upon the speaker as if from without.

The impulse as personified other, hailed and feared as uncontrollable and divine—this is the most spiritual and most proximate deity in the *Odes*. The Muses, Bacchus and their instruments of power are almost interchangeable instances of this same thought and feeling. It should be no surprise, then, that some of the most striking demonstrations of the addressee's presence—namely the speaker's possession by Calliope in 3.4 and Bacchus in 3.25—and the most complex gestures to the audience (2.19.2 *credite posteris*; 3.4.5 *auditis*) occur in poems addressed to these interrelated gods. On the other hands, the principal gods of state cult,

⁷⁵ Schmidt 2002: 179 compiles a similar group of 'göttlichen Kräfte, die in den Oden das Musische interpretieren.'

⁷⁶ Cf. Burkert 1985: 182-89; he argues that the early Greek poets, especially Homer, take the anthropomorphism of the Near Eastern pantheon to a new extreme: 'the gods as the poets introduce them are human almost to the last detail. They are far from purely spiritual. Vital elements of corporeality belong inalienably to their being ...' (183).

Apollo and Jupiter, are approached cautiously and kept at a distance. Mercury occupies a middle point: he shares the characteristics of the poet, pointing the way from the distant and impassive Olympians of Epicurean doctrine to the immediacy of divine presence that inheres in the poems addressed to Bacchus and the Muses. Yet he is the first step only, not the culmination, of Horace's poetic negotiation of the divine.

Of central importance to the Augustan program of religious revival was the restoration of the 82 temples in need of repair during his sixth consulship (28 BC).⁷⁷ Some gods, however, received more favorable treatment than others. The Temple of the Dionysiac Triad (Liber, Libera and Ceres) on the Aventine, for instance, burned to the ground in 31 BC and was not fully restored until AD 17, when it was rededicated by Tiberius. Though the *princeps* could claim to have passed over no temple, the inferior status of this ancient but plebeian cult in the hierarchy of Augustan religion was nonetheless made clear.⁷⁸ Horace, who was inspired to speak prophetically in favor of the rebuilding program, enforced his own hierarchy of divinity through lyric address and varying modes of divine presence.⁷⁹ Apollo and Jupiter are kept at a respectful distance; Mercury draws closer, a minor deity symbolically elevated above the others. The Muses and Bacchus are not only summoned, but actually appear; in a sense, they are with us always, slumbering embers of expanded consciousness, waiting to be awakened by the sudden gust of poetic sensibility.

⁷⁷ *Res Gestae* 20.

⁷⁸ Zanker 1988: 109-10.

⁷⁹ *Odes* 3.4.1-2 *Delicta maiorum inmeritis lues / Romane, donec templa refeceris ...*

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